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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 04025

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004025

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2015
TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [SA](#) [JO](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: MINSTATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS HAMDAN ON IRAQ, SAUDI
BORDER, JORDAN AID

REF: STATE 168923

Classified By: Ambassador Michele J. Sison, reasons 1.4(b)
and (d).

11. (U) Summary. Ambassador called on Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed al Nahyan (HbZ) September 19 to thank the UAE for its \$100 million in Hurricane Katrina assistance and to discuss Iraq, the UAE-Saudi border, UAE assistance to the Palestinians, and possible additional UAE aid to Jordan. HbZ had been out of the country for over a month, having traveled to the U.S. and Morocco over the summer. He was joined by his office Director, Ambassador Sultan al Rumaithy, and Yousef al Otaiba of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi's office. End Summary.

HURRICANE KATRINA ASSISTANCE

12. (U) Ambassador delivered Secretary Rice's message to Sheikh Hamdan (reftel) expressing appreciation to the UAE for its generous donation of \$100 million. She also thanked Sheikh Hamdan for the condolences expressed in Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan's September 17 address to the United Nations, in which the UAE noted sympathy for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. HbZ said that President Khalifa and Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed had been following news reports very closely and had been deeply moved by the suffering they saw.

IRAQ

13. (C) Ambassador previewed the proposed October 8 visit of Ambassador Jim Jeffrey and an interagency team to UAE, recalling the positive meeting HbZ had enjoyed with former Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq Dick Jones. The

Ambassador asked that the UAE encourage Iraqi voter turnout in December and consider publicly congratulating the Iraqi people on having drafted a constitution. She urged the UAE to upgrade its representation in Iraq from Charge d'affaires level to Ambassadorial rank and to exchange high-level visits. She also urged pressure on Syria and Iran to respect Iraq's sovereignty and to stop the use of Syrian and Iranian territory by those seeking to destabilize Iraq. HbZ agreed that halting the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq was key to stability and security. Ambassador also urged rapid disbursement of the UAE's pledged assistance to Iraq and implementation of debt relief commitments.

¶4. (C) Returning to the topic of Syria, HbZ recalled that his late father, Sheikh Zayed, had sent HbZ's brother Abdullah to meet Syrian President Bashar al Assad to convince Bashar to make changes. (Note: In fact, Abdullah most recently met Bashar on July 31 in Damascus. End Note.) The Emirati leadership did not have much hope in Bashar's ability to effect change, said HbZ. Ambassador underscored the USG's policy of "isolation, not engagement" with regard to Syria. "I'm not optimistic about Bashar's leadership ability," concluded HbZ. He complained that other GCC countries had not been "out in front" on support for Iraq. "Where are they," he asked, "and why are they holding back? A stable Iraq is important for the whole region." HbZ said that he intended to raise this issue with Oman's Sultan Qaboos when he visits Muscat next week.

¶5. (C) Ambassador asked about HbZ's recent meeting with former Iraqi PM Iyad Allawi in Morocco. HbZ replied that "we have lost a great deal in not having Allawi in power during this period. Interim PM Ibrahim Jaafari is weak, and Iraq needs a strong leader." HbZ said that he hoped Allawi would do well in the upcoming elections, and that the UAE intended to continue its support for him. "However, we hope Allawi will still be alive when election day comes," he muttered ominously. Iran's meddling in Iraqi affairs was "very serious," he added.

SAUDI BORDER DISPUTE

¶6. (C) HbZ reported that he had received an invitation about ten days earlier from the Saudi Interior Minister, Prince Nayyef, to visit Riyadh to continue discussions on the disputed UAE-Saudi border. HbZ said that he had accepted the invitation and hoped to travel to Riyadh before the beginning of Ramadan (i.e. before October 4-5). However, the tone of Prince Nayyef's letter had been telling, he felt: Nayyef had proposed that the goal of the meeting be to discuss "implementation" of the 1974 bilateral agreement on the border issue, while the UAE believes that the meeting should focus on amendments to the agreement. HbZ noted that he had briefed the (U.S.) Vice President on the issue in detail during their August 10 meeting.

ASSISTANCE FOR JORDAN, PALESTINIANS

¶7. (C) Ambassador asked HbZ for an update on financial assistance to Jordan to ease fuel cost woes. HbZ recalled recent UAEG discussion of oil vs. cash assistance for Jordan, and said that he would refer the issue to his older brother, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed. (Note: On September 20, Ambassador asked MbZ where the issue stood. MbZ noted that Jordan's King Abdullah was one of his closest personal friends, that he wanted to be of assistance, but that "it was not yet clear" where the decision would go. The implication was that President Khalifa would have to weigh in on the matter. End note.)

¶8. (SBU) HbZ's office director, Sultan al Rumaithy, noted that the UAE wondered why other GCC countries were not stepping up aid to the Palestinians in view of developments in Gaza. The UAE believed that the Arab world needed to "live up to its words" and intended to send a high-level delegation to the Palestinian donors conference in Amman in November.

SISON